



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

Press Release

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CANADIAN GETS MORE THAN SEVEN YEARS FOR POT SMUGGLING AND ASSAULTING A FEDERAL OFFICER

SEATTLE — U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is asking for the public's help to identify other conspirators in a marijuana smuggling scheme that ended with a spectacular blaze aboard a Bayliner pleasure craft last July. The appeal comes less than a week after a Canadian national was sentenced here in federal court for his role in that scheme.

Eric Richard Ethier, 29, of Vancouver, British Columbia, received an 87-month prison term for smuggling approximately 450 pounds of marijuana into the United States from Canada and assaulting a federal officer. Last July, ICE Special Agents and Air and Marine Operations Enforcement Officers arrested Ethier after he attempted to smuggle the BC Bud marijuana, valued at more than \$1.3 million, into the United States near Stuart Island on a 23-foot Bayliner pleasure vessel.



Prior to his arrest, Ethier fled from an ICE interceptor vessel, after ramming it several times, and then attempted to scuttle his 23-foot boat by setting it on fire. ICE Special Agents were able to recover the partially burned BC Bud marijuana contained in 15 hockey-type equipment bags, but other potential evidence was incinerated in the fire.

"This is yet another case of a maritime smuggler moving large quantities of marijuana from British Columbia into the United States for financial gain," said Seattle ICE Special Agent-in-Charge Leigh Winchell. "Although ramming a law enforcement vessel and attempting to scuttle one's boat is unusual, it demonstrates the dangerous nature of our enforcement work."

Due to the fire damage, ICE Special Agents were unable to gather any additional evidence from the burned boat or from the boat's operator. Anyone with information regarding this incident is asked to contact ICE at 360-332-6725.

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ICE, the primary investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security, was established to bring a unified focus to the enforcement of U.S. immigration and customs laws, with the principal goal of preventing violations by terrorists and other criminals who threaten the nation's security.